

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR SOCI PL
SUBJECT: STUDENT TRIALS IN KRAKOW

1. A SMALL GROUP OF KRAKOW STUDENTS, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STUDENT SOLIDARITY (SKS), WILL GO ON TRIAL IN THE LOWER KRAKOW COURTS MARCH 13 AND 14. THEY FACE MISDEMEANOR CHARGES STEMMING FROM INCIDENTS HERE FEBRUARY 11 AND 12 WHEN LOCAL POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES BROKE UP A LECTURE BY ACTIVIST LEADER ADAM MICHNICK. THERE IS SOME INDICATION OTHER STUDENTS MAY TRY TO DISRUPT THE COURT PROCEEDINGS. WARSAW AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY HAVE ORDERED HARSHER APPLICATION OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE AS ANOTHER MEANS OF SUPPRESSING STUDENT ACTIVISM.

2. AS REPORTED EARLIER, KRAKOW POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICE AGENTS FEBRUARY 11 BROKE UP A GROUP OF SOME 100 STUDENTS AND OTHER SKS MEMBERS GATHERED IN A PRIVATE KRAKOW APARTMENT TO HEAR A LECTURE BY KORKSS LEADER ADAM MICHNICK AS PART OF THE "ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSITY" CONCEPT PROTESTING AGAINST LIMITS TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

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ONE SOURCE INDICATED THAT TEAR GAS WAS USED TO DISPERSE THE GROUP, BUT THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY. AS THE GROUP LEFT, SOME 20 SECURITY AGENTS SELECTED SEVERAL FOR ON-THE-SPOT QUESTIONING. WHICH LASTED UNTIL ABOUT 4:00 A.M. AFTER CONFISCATION OF THEIR PERSONAL IDENTITY DOCUMENTS. ALL THOSE QUESTIONED WERE RELEASED.

3. LATER THAT WEEKEND, AS MICHNIK WAS WAITING FOR A RETURN TO WARSAW, HE AND A SMALL GROUP OF STUDENT WELL-WISHERS WERE APPROACHED BY THREE PLAIN-CLOTHES POLICEMEN OR SECURITY AGENTS, WHO TOOK MICHNIK ASIDE ON THE PLATFORM AND ROUGHED HIM UP, REPORTEDLY TEARING HIS CLOTHES AND KNOCKING HIM DOWN. SEVERAL OF THE STUDENTSS, WHO ATTEMPTED TO INTERVENE, WERE DETAINED FOR "QUESTIONING" BUT RELEASED AFTER CONFISCATION OF THEIR IDENTITY DOCUMENTS. (COMMENT: A MEMORANDUM TO THE FILE, CONTAINING MORE DETAIL ON THIS INCIDENT, HAS BEEN POUCHEO TO THE DEPARTMENT. END COMMENT.)

4. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NO LONG-TERM DETENTIONS STEMMING FROM THESE INCIDENTS, ALL THOSE SCHEDULED FOR TRIAL HAVE CALLED BACK FOR QUESTIONING, SOME REPEATEDLY AND AT LENGTH. WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY OR UNUSUAL HARASSMENT IN THESE ITEROOGATIONS.

5. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, ABOUT TEN STUDENTS FACE TRIAL MONDAY AND TUESDAY ON CHARGES OF BREACH OF THE PEACE OR "IMPROPER USE OF THE PUBLIC STREETS" AN APPARANT REFERENCE THE NOISY SCENES WHICH FOLLOWED THE BREAKUP OF MICHNIK'S LECTURE.
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6. ONE SOURCE INDICATES OTHER STUDENTS PLAN TO TRY TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE TRIAL AUDIENCE ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY, AND , IF POSSIBLE, DISRUPT THE PROCEEDINGS BY HECKLING. (COMMENT: SUCH A COURRE PREDICTABLY COULD NOT BE IGNORED BY THE AUTHORITIES; ANY HECKLERS WOULD PROBABLY FIND THEMSELVES QUICKLY AND QUIETLY BEHIND BARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, ANY ATTEMPT BY THE AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT STUDENT ACCESS TO THE TRIAL COULD LEAD TO A MORE PUBLIC AND LESS CONTROLLABLE CONFRONTATION, AND PROVIDE CAUSE FOR FURTHER STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HERE. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THE STUDENTS PLANNING TO ATTEND AND HECKLE ARE SKS MEMBERS; IF SO, THIS WOULD INDICATE

A BREAK WITH THE COMMITTEE'S PRESENT POLICY OF AVOIDING CONFLICT WITH THE AUTHORITIES WHEREEVER POSSIBLE. END COMMENT.)

7. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE FEBRUARY 11 EVENTS AND STUDENT DETENTIONS SINCE THAT TIME, JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY

RECTOR MIECZYSLAW HESS AND OTHER KRAKOW ACADEMIC LEADERS RECENTLY WERE CALLED TO WARSAW, TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF THE SKS AND INDICATIONS OF THE GROWING STUDENT MILITANCY. AT A MEETING OF THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE WHICH TOOK PLACE AFTER HIS RETURN FROM WARSAW, HESS IS SAID TO HAVE INFORMED DEPARTMENT HEADS THAT UNAUTHORIZED LECTURES SUCH AS THOSE ATTEMPTED BY MICHNIK WERE "SERIOUS OFFENSES AGAINST ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE," WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT ACADEMIC SANCTIONS SHOULD BE APPLIED AGAINST STUDENTS KNOWN TO ATTEND SUCH LECTURES. AT LEAST ONE DEPARTMENT HEAD IS REPORTED TO HAVE RESPONDED THAT IF THE UNIVERSITY COULD NOT PROVIDE PRINTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUMMARIES OF SUCH "UNAUTHORIZED" LECTURES, OR OTHER INDICATIONS OF THEIR CONTENT, AS ACADEMICS THEY COULD NOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE ADVISE THEIR STUDENTS OR STAFF AGAINST ATTENDING. HESS REPORTEDLY DID NOT PICK UP THIS FLUNG GUANTLET, BUT SIMPLY REPEATED HIS WARNINGS, STRESSING THAT THEY CAME FROM WARSAW AND WERE NOT SIMPLY HIS OWN OPINIONS.

8. COMMENT: OVERALL(THE FEBRUARY 11 WEEKEND INCIDENTS AND SUBSEQUENT DETENTIONS HAVE DISTURBED BOTH THE STUDENT AND THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY IN KRAKOW. NEITHER SIDE APPEARS TO HAVE MUCH STOMACH FOR CONFRONTATION, BUT POLICE HARRASSMENT OF MICHNIK AND THE SKS APPEAR TO HAVE HARDENED STUDENT COMMUNITY RESOLVE NOT TO ACCEPT QUIETLY WHAT THEY SEE AND UNJUSTIFIABLE RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR ACADEMIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS. IF LOCAL AUTHORITIES -- WHO CANNOT NOW ESCAPE PUNISHING THE OFFENDING STUDENTS PUBLICLY, AT LEAST IN TOKEN FASHION -- HANDLE THE UPCOMING TRIALS AND POSSIBLE STUDENT DISRUPTIONS DISCREETLY AND QUICKLY, THE RIPPLES FROM THE FEBRUARY 11 EVENTS COULD SUBSIDE QUIETLY. HOWEVER, ANY OVER-REACTION OR HAN-HANDED RESPONSE CLEARLY WOULD LEAVE THE KRAKOW STUDENT COMMUNITY EVEN MORE DISGRUNTLED AND ACTION-ORIENTED AS THE SUMMER SEASON APPROACHES. ALTHOUGH WE PLAN TO STAY AWAY FROM THE COURTHOUSE RECINTS ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY BECOME KNOWN. END COMMENT.

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